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ABSTRACT

The dramatic performance and writing activities in this guide are applicable to all grade levels and content areas. Methods are suggested for selecting material for oral interpretation and dramatics, and specific student activities are listed in the following areas: monologue, dialogue, and conversation; oral reading of prose, poetry, and drama, and storytelling; professional theatre, amateur productions, television, and film; videotaping, tape recording, and recordings; classroom productions; theatre games, charades, and pantomimes; radio plays; improvisation; role-playing; and imaging. Bibliographies of stories for oral reading and dramatics and of resource materials are included. (AEA)

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A GUIDE TO USING DRAMATIC PERFORMANCE AND ORAL INTERPRETATION IN THE WRITING CLASS

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WISCONSIN WRITING PROJECT 1979

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Introduction

Learning, thinking and writing can be prompted by dramatic performance and oral interpretation in all content areas at all grade levels. The performance and writing activities in this guide are, with slight variations, applicable to all grade levels. With that in mind, we have not subdivided our guide by grade level or content area. Rather, we hope that you will peruse all activities and select and adapt for yourself those that will be most beneficial to your students. The list of writing activities following each dramatic activity is not meant to be all encompassing. Thus, we have left space on those pages for you to add your own ideas and activities so that this will, in effect, become your guide rather than ours. Several more specific, ready-to-use activities have also been provided in each section in order to demonstrate the easy application of the writing activities to performance and also to supply you with some samples of what can be done. Again, these lists are brief and should be expanded at your every opportunity.

As you use the activities, find others in your reading and invent more of your own, we urge you to share those that have been most rewarding with your colleagues as we have shared these with you.

"Creativity is not just for the artist or the gifted. It is for people. It is a way of working, a way of thinking, a way of living."

Rationale

"If a comparison may be drawn, it could be said that language is like a windowpane. I may throw bricks at it to vent my feelings about something; I may use a chunk of it to chase away an intruder; I may use it to mirror or explore reality; and I may use a stained glass window to call attention to itself as an object of beauty. Windows, like language, can be used expressively, persuasively, referentially, and esthetically."

James E. Kinneavy
"The Basic Aims of Discourse"

"These kids can't write" is the plaintive cry of a vast number of teachers, parents, and employers. In many cases it's true. How do we remedy that situation? Obviously, by doing a better job of teaching students to write. Of course, some of us are more involved in this than others. Nevertheless, because we all require logical thinking and some form of written expression in our classrooms, we are all teachers of writing. In order to be better writing teachers and to facilitate the child's need for competence in expressive and transactional writing, we need to employ as many strategies as possible.

Dramatic performance and oral interpretation in their many and varied forms provide an often neglected but extremely effective strategy for the teaching of creative and mechanically sound writing. Dramatic performance and oral interpretation require

the same thought processes and procedures that good writing does for both the teacher and the student: motivation, planning, playing (writing) and evaluation. Dramatic performance and oral interpretation, as it is intended here, must not be confused with theatrical drama. The technical and professional aspects of theatre are not of necessary concern to the classroom teacher. Rather, the aim of dramatic performance and oral interpretation should be to help students understand the problems and concepts that the classroom teacher wishes to present. In fact, the primary function of dramatic performance and oral interpretation is to aid students in the clarification and communication of their personal and vicarious experiences and feelings. The primary function of writing is the same. Also, as it is in writing, the primary role of the teacher is as a facilitator, resource person, observer. Dramatic performance and oral interpretation can motivate writing not only as a pre-performance preparatory activity but also as an evaluative activity. As a motivator, then, dramatic performance and oral interpretation will encourage preparation and observation, both of which are prerequisites to good writing. Dramatic performance and oral interpretation will also demonstrate the need for precision in writing and provide a variety of writing experiences.

Concerned and creative teachers will use dramatic performance and oral interpretation in conjunction with more traditional

activities as a tool to help their students become more logical, creative and perceptive writers and thinkers.

The value of dramatic performance and oral interpretation is perhaps best summarized by James Moffett in Student-Centered Curriculum in Language Arts and Reading, p. 101. He states that the purposes of drama are to

1. Promote expression of all kinds, movement and speech harmonizing and reinforcing each other.
2. Limber body, mind, and tongue.
3. Single out the verbal mode from the others and thus to activate speech in particular.
4. Forge drama into both a learning instrument for other ends as well as an appropriate end in itself.
5. Make the school experience with language fun and meaningful in youngsters' terms.
6. Habituate students to working autonomously in small groups.
7. Further peer socialization of learning sort not usually possible outside of school.
8. Gain intuitive understanding of style as voice, role, and stance, and of rhetoric as achieving effects on others.

9. Develop in the more familiar mode of dramatic play those characteristics necessary for the less familiar process of discussing, such as attending, responding, interacting, and taking turns.
10. Exercise and channel emotions.

Selection, Adapting and Staging

The following may be an aid in selecting material for oral interpretation and dramatic activity: (See "Oral Interpretations: A Path to Meaning," Language Arts, March 1977.)

I. Selection of Literature

When selecting a story or poem to be read aloud one should look for:

A. Literature of sounds and substance to sustain interest and delight through repeated readings.

B. Plentiful action, allowing for strong, varied movement.

C. Conversation, formal or informal, which will cause readers to interact.

D. Life-like characters (including fantasy and animal characters) with which readers can identify.

E. A logical, sequential story line--a beginning, turning or climax, and a resolution.

F. Emotional and sensory appeal.

G. Language rhythms - repetition, clever rhyme, nonsense sounds, etc.

H. Imagery potential.

I. Vocabulary - and language-extending forms.

J. Appropriateness for age level.

K. Adaptability to classroom limitations.

II. Adaptation of Literature

A few basic guidelines to putting selected literature into a script format are helpful.

A. Read the entire book or selection before cutting.

B. Outline occurrences which build on each other.

C. Note scenes which coincide with the outline.

D. Include as much interaction and dialogue as possible.

E. Maintain strong, essential characters.

F. Determine number of students and length of time desired.

G. Keep the narrator's role flexible (drop "he saids" "she saids" after characters are established).

H. Condense and omit only where necessary.

I. Retain author's style and words.

J. Retain new concepts and vocabulary for cognitive and linguistic growth.

III. Staging the Reading

A. Costumes, props, makeup and sets are unnecessary. Simple props can be used to emphasize what the readers are "suggesting."

B. One or many people may read. Others may pantomime during reading.

C. Readers may remain stationary or use gestures, etc.

D. Script may be read or memorized.

E. On-stage or off-stage focus may be used. Off-stage focus is in the audience. On-stage focus has the readers looking at each other.

F. Use introductions to set the stage for a scene.

G. Music and choreography can be effective in some cases.

H. Encourage and accept individual creative expression.

I. Keep staging simple; use the imagination of the listener.

Activities

MONOLOGUE, DIALOGUE AND CONVERSATION

MONOLOGUE: A dramatic sketch performed by one actor.

DIALOGUE: A conversation between two or more people.

CONVERSATION: Talking or conversing about a particular subject.

RELATED WRITING ACTIVITIES:

1. Write an additional soliloquy for a play.
2. Rewrite a soliloquy in modern day slang.
3. Write and perform a parallel version of a piece, using another perspective.
4. Write a parody (humorous take off) of a modern day comedian.
5. Write a monologue for a TV comedian.
6. Write a monologue personifying an object and perform it.
7. Write a one-sided telephone conversation.
8. Write and tape a "Mission Impossible" tape.
9. Write a play using two-word dialogue.

10. Write a dialogue for a famous duo (e.g., Batman and Robin, Laurel and Hardy).

11. Write a dialogue for a picture.

"Give me the right word and I'll move the world."
Joseph Conrad

Deposit 10 Cents Please

As students come into the classroom, pretend you are talking on the telephone to someone. Students will be curious about your behavior. Tell them the life of a telephone must be a curious one. Have students think of some conversations a telephone overhears.

Have students then select the type of telephone they would like to be and why. (Examples: push button, wall phone, old-fashioned wind-up telephone, etc.) Ask them where they would like to be: in an office, at the airport, in a teenagers's bedroom, etc.

Students are to write and then act out a story about their life as a telephone, including overheard conversations.

This could be adapted for a history class where the teacher would assign each student an historical person's telephone.

Friends, Romans, Countrymen

After reading and discussing the play "Julius Ceasar," have the students take Mark Antony's funeral oration and rewrite it in modern day slang.

You might also assign each student to be a different character from the play and have them meet as guests on the Johnny Carson Show. Divide the groups so that each group has both major and minor characters. Have them present their show to the class.

Throwing Light

Two members of the class decide upon a secret topic of conversation. They then begin discussing the topic in the presence of other players. They must not make false statements, although they may try to mislead the others. Other players may not ask questions or guess the topic aloud, but are to join the conversation when they feel they know its subject. The first players may challenge any newcomer who, if correct about the topic, may stay in the game. If incorrect, the player is out of the game. A player may join in the conversation for some time without arousing suspicion and being challenged. The game is played until all players are in or out. Try not to use the word "It" in place of the topic.

Conversation With Involvement

Teams of two or more players decide on a simple topic of discussion and proceed to eat and drink a large meal while keeping up a continuous conversation. Then discuss what kinds of food the players were eating, did they show you or tell you? Were the players able to eat the meal and still keep up the conversation at the same time? Did they swallow their food?

Do Not Scratch

In teams of two, agree on Where, Who and What so that one person is under close scrutiny by the others and must cover up

a physical irritation or embarrassing blemish. All attempts to remedy or conceal are to be integrated within Where, Who and What. For example: A is being interviewed for a job by B and has garlic breath or a spot on the tie. Or A is a schoolgirl on a blind date with a rip in her dress or a run in her stocking. Did the players work the irritation into the conversation? You could also do this activity with a person doing some sort of monologue and having a physical irritation and trying to get rid of it gracefully as he or she presents the monologue.

ORAL READING OF PROSE, POETRY AND PLAYS, STORYTELLING

ORAL READING: Oral reading of prose, poetry or plays.

STORYTELLING: Retelling of a story from memory or from visual clues and notes.

RELATED WRITING ACTIVITIES:

1. Rewrite the story from another point of view.
2. Punctuate a story as the teacher reads it.
3. Write repeater books and read for younger children. (See Model Guide - WWP 1978 for bibliography)
4. Write impressions after hearing and/or reading a story.
5. List words and phrases that make the story come alive.
6. Finish the story or add an additional chapter.
7. Write and present an original story/poem/play to a group of smaller children.
8. Write a panel discussion for the characters in a particular story or group of stories.
9. Write a dramatization for a poem.

10. Write a poem from a dramatization.

11. Poet in Residence - (from Wisconsin Arts Council) - Students write letters or poems in appreciation.

ORAL READING ACTIVITIES

Stories By Candle Light

The teacher selects a story with an exciting climax to read aloud. Tell the students that you are going to begin reading the story after lighting a candle. They are to listen carefully. When the candle wick is blown out, they are to write an ending for the story.

I've Got A Secret

Select a simple, well-written poem. Without informing the class, invite about a half-dozen well-known faculty and staff members to record the poem on tape for you. Bring the tape to class and play it for the students. After each mystery voice has been heard, interrupt the tape and invite the students to guess the identity of the reader. After listening, ask for volunteers to recite the poem from memory. Discuss the interpretation of the poem. Appoint a committee of two or three students to write thank you notes to the owners of the mystery voices.

Punctuation Deleted

Give students a copy of a short selection with all punctuation marks removed. As you read the selection aloud, following given punctuation, have students insert punctuation as your voice indicates.

This activity may also be done with the students inserting punctuation where they think it belongs before it is read aloud. Then have several read their punctuated selections. Discuss differences if they occur. Then read the selection with its proper punctuation.

Authors

Read a "repeater" book to the class. Using that book as a model, have students write and illustrate their own repeater books. Have them share their books with younger children.

STORYTELLING ACTIVITIES

The Tale End

Tell the children a tall tale or fairy tale. After you finish, have them write the tale as they remember it.

Turnabout

Tell the children a tale from a given point of view. (Such as "The Three Bears" from Papa Bear's point of view.) Have students write the same story from another point of view (e.g., Goldilocks). Then have them tell their stories to the class.

PROFESSIONAL THEATRE, AMATEUR PRODUCTIONS, TELEVISION, FILM

PROFESSIONAL THEATRE: Drama originally performed for money.

AMATEUR PRODUCTIONS: School plays, local theatre groups and university sponsored plays.

TELEVISION: Programs on television.

FILM: Movies of any type.

RELATED WRITING ACTIVITIES:

1. Interview an actor or actress.
2. Write a letter to a character in the play or to one of the actors/actresses.
3. Place yourself in the role of a critic and write a review for the newspaper.
4. Rewrite the dialogue of a given scene. (Update the language.)
5. Write an alternative ending.
6. Write advertisements or posters.
7. Evaluate the ads already out.
8. Write about how the author's life relates to the play.
9. Write your impressions of what the play may be about before you see it.
10. Write a letter as the best friend of one of the characters.

11. Do a study of the language of the theatre.

12. Write the script for a scene from a silent movie.

"An actor is as great as his imagination."

To Be or Not To Be

After having seen the play Oedipus Rex, divide the class into six groups. Assign one group to each of the major roles in the play. After being assigned their roles, the groups should re-write that role into modern English. The sixth group should be assigned to write two detailed descriptions. The first should be of what a modern day setting of the play should look like and the second should detail the costumes that the various characters should wear.

I Can't Hear You

Videotape an old but familiar television show. Show it to the class with the sound turned off. Divide the class into small groups and each group should write a dialogue for one scene of the play. Make sure video tape is available as often as it is needed. Have students read in the dialogue as you review the tape.

All in the Class

Have each student pick one of his or her favorite TV shows to watch carefully for three weeks. Tell the students to pay particular attention to the traits of the major characters and plot structure. After three weeks have elapsed, have the students put their observations on paper in a formal analysis.

Those students who chose similar programs ("Happy Days," "Laverne and Shirley," "Jeffersons," "All in the Family," etc.) can then compare papers and in small groups write formulas for successful TV shows. (As an additional activity, the students could be asked to follow those formulas in an "original" script.)

VIDEOTAPING, TAPE RECORDING, RECORDINGS

VIDEOTAPING: Viewing and/or taping

TAPE RECORDING: Listening and/or recording

RECORDINGS: Records and tapes

RELATED WRITING ACTIVITIES:

1. Write a story or develop a character from a song.
2. Tape productions of news stories written from fairy tales, nursery rhymes, poetry, etc.
3. Evaluate your performance after viewing or listening to the recording.
4. Write a TV show and record it on video tape.
5. Write a critique of the whole performance.
6. Survey others about positive and negative aspects of the production.
7. Write directions for a demonstration and record it.
8. Write directions for use of AV material or equipment and record it.
9. Write letters of advice to the performers.
10. Write commercials or jingles to be performed.
11. Write and perform a documentary.
12. Rewrite the lyrics for a popular song.

VIDEO-TAPE ACTIVITIES

Fifteen Minutes

Choose a current problem or event that is in the news and find material to create a 15-minute documentary using narrative material to connect topics. Video tape the documentary.

News From Fairyland

Familiarize students with many fairytales or nursery rhymes. Discuss characters and main events. Have each student choose one to rewrite as a modern day news story for the 6:00 News. (Example: Goldilocks - Girl Accused of Breaking and Entering) Have students rehearse reading them aloud in preparation for video taping.

Candid Camera

Video tape a class play, speeches, or demonstrations. Have each student write a critique of his or her own or others' performances.

The Ad Game

After studying advertisements and persuasive techniques, have students write commercials or jingles. Perform and tape.

TAPE RECORDINGS

Let Your Fingers Do The Talking

Write a script to accompany a puppet play. Tape the script. Perform the play using the taped script.

Whoops

Use the tape recorder in the editing process. Have students read their written material and tape it. Then have them replay it, following along on their paper and edit as they play it back.

Reporter's Task

Use the tape recorder in conducting an interview. From the tape, write the interview into a news article.

Pre-Game Highlights

Write an interview with a famous sports person after reading a book about that person. Pretend that you are the interviewer and the person being interviewed. Change your voice for each role and tape the interview. (Example: Bob Euchre interviewing Hank Aaron before the "old-timers" game in Milwaukee Co. Stadium)

RECORDINGS

Attack!

Use the recording of "War of the Worlds" by Orson Welles. Have students put themselves in the place of a listener on the day that broadcast occurred. Have them write of their possible reactions. Perhaps they could update the happening and write a news broadcast.

Song Writers

Listen to a popular song on record. Have students write new lyrics to it.

CLASSROOM PRODUCTIONS

CLASSROOM PRODUCTIONS: Viewing of and/or participation in plays performed by a classroom of children. Can be performed in the classroom for the class or for others.

RELATED WRITING ACTIVITIES:

1. Write a thank-you note to someone who has performed for you.
2. Write an invitation or program for your performance.
3. Write a synopsis of the acts.
4. Write your personal reaction to being an actor.
5. Critique a performance.
6. Write directions for lighting, sound, etc.
7. Write a play with two word dialogue.
8. Take a familiar play and change the script.
9. Write a drama developed from "story in the round" (progressive story building).
10. After reading several novels as a class, the students write a skit and present it between several characters in several of the books.
11. Write skits using vocabulary words used in the play.
12. Write the script for an Oscar or Emmy or Tony awards banquet.

13. Write and perform a script using "pig Latin."

14. Give students several objects in a bag and have students write a script using all the objects.

"Good actors, like good plays,
are made of flesh and blood, not
a bundle of tricks."
Raymond Massey

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CLASSROOM PRODUCTIONS

Come to Fairy Land

A. Study some fairy tales or act out scenes from well-known tales.

B. Select scenes which highlight surroundings, scenery, and feelings.

C. Using sensory images and descriptive words, write a letter or directions, telling someone how to get to Fairy Land, or the location of the Fairytale.

You've Won

A. After viewing a production, put students in small groups to write awards presentations to people in the play.

B. Give awards to characters in the short stories, novels and plays read during the school year.

C. Write acceptance speeches for awards given for performances.

D. Include in your writing what you liked, why you liked the performance, etc.

THEATRE GAMES, CHARADES, PANTOMIMES

THEATRE GAMES: Games of dramatic performance

CHARADES: A theatre game in which players act out in pantomime a word or title that their own team must guess.

PANTOMIMES: The art or technique of conveying emotions, actions feelings, etc. by mute gestures.

RELATED WRITING ACTIVITIES:

1. Charade vocabulary words, book titles, motion picture titles television shows, etc.
2. Write directions and have another pantomime exactly what was written.
3. Take notes on another pantomime.
4. Evaluate another pantomime.
5. Plan, write and perform your own pantomime.
6. Write a story and have others pantomime the characters as you read it.
7. Take slides of a pantomime and write a narration.
8. Write a narration for a pantomime.

9. Analyze a pantomime character.

10. Write a script for a pantomime with more than one person.

11. Write a script for a pantomime using just your hands or feet.

"A gesture is not sufficient;
it needs to be clothed in thought."
Jean Louis Barrault

Charade

Students act out words, or titles of books, motion pictures, TV programs, etc. Divide the class into two teams. Each member has one turn to express the title, word, etc. using action only. First, each team must generate enough titles for the opposing team to use, at least one per member. To play, a member selects at random one of the titles generated by the opposing team and has a one minute time limit to enact it for his or her own team. If the member's team correctly guesses it in the time limit, they earn one point, if not they forfeit their point. It is then the other team's turn. Students may then wish to write instructions for action to exchange them with other students, and attempt to guess the title or word.

Can You Guess? (See Theatre Game File, Viola Spolin)

This is similar to charades, but is a nonverbal theatre game. It demands more imagery and ability to pretend. An imaginary box is placed on a table for all to see. No one knows how large it is, or what it contains. A child comes up and "opens" the box. It is his/her job to show how large it is and what it contains, non-verbally. The student who guesses correctly takes the next turn. As a writing activity, have students imagine an object,

and without identifying it, write an accurate description so that other class members can guess it.

How Do I Feel?

In this activity, a student walks into the room and affects an attitude that reveals how he "feels." It may be hunger, exhaustion, frustration, etc. Write the situation (who, what, where) that caused the person to have this attitude.

Any More Out There?

Other questions that lend themselves to charades and pantomimes are:

A. How Does it Look?

B. What's Wrong

C. Who am I?

D. What am I Eating, Smelling, Hearing?

E. What Do I Do For a Living?

F. How Old am I?

Character Sketches

Have students pantomime specific characters such as:

A. An old man smoking a pipe.

B. A woman shopping with two children.

C. An older or younger person eating.

D. A heavy-set person sitting down.

E. An old person walking.

After the pantomimes, have students choose one character and write a character sketch.

Dubbing (See 'Theatre Game File , Viola Spolin)

This is a theatre game involving several students. Two or three actors select members of the same sex to be voices. The entire group agrees to a situation (who, what, where), and as the voices develop a conversation, the actors must portray it by mouthing and actions for the rest of the class. Have audience critique, in writing, the performance, pointing out the humorous aspects and the difficulties in this theatre game. Or, have them write new dialogue, using the same situation (who, what, where) of the performance.

RADIO PLAYS

RADIO PLAYS: A play performed for listening.

RELATED WRITING ACTIVITIES:

1. Write your own script.
2. Transcribe for another group to perform.
3. Write impressions of a specific character.
4. Write a sound effect plot for a radio play.
5. Describe the use of expression and choice of words.
6. Write stage directions.
7. Turn a play into a story.
8. Critique a radio play.
9. Compare two performances of the same play.
10. Write commercials, posters and jingles for the radio play.

"Good words are worth much
and cost little."
George Herbert

Listen Carefully

Assign students (or have them choose their own) a character from a radio play to concentrate on while they listen to the radio play. Tell them to listen very carefully to that specific character and after the play is over have them write their impressions of that character.

It's An Original?

Have students find a short play typically found in a student magazine and have them rewrite the play into radio play format. They should also include sound effects. Have them then tape their production (with sound effects) and have the class evaluate their work.

Who Will Buy This?

After discussing radio advertisements and their style, have the students dream up their own products and write advertisements for them so they can tape them for the class or to be included when they do their radio play.

This could be related to a history class by having the students create advertisements of a particular period of time.

A home economics teacher might also have students advertise a particular recipe or product.

IMPROVISATION

IMPROVISATION: Games of dramatic performance.

RELATED WRITING ACTIVITIES:

1. Develop an improvisation event (who, what, where).
2. Write a dialogue for an improvisation.
3. Take notes on an improvisation being performed.
4. Develop new situations for the improvisation.
5. Develop a script for TV from the improvisation.
6. Set up a situation to stimulate dialogue and then write the dialogue.
7. Turn improvisation into a narrative story or poem.
8. Write a soliloquy.

IMPROVISATION

A brief sketch or play, improvised on the spot or with a very short preparation time. It may be done as a solo, in pairs, or in small groups, with the rest of the class as the audience. Topics should include some form of action, and should establish the who, what, and where of the situation. Some examples of possible situations are:

What Would You Do If:

A. A tiger was stalking you in a jungle?

B. You found a $10 bill on the street corner?

C. You found a cockroach in the bottom of your chocolate shake?

D. You blow a bubble in an elegant restaurant, and it pops on your face?

E. You buy a Coke for your new boy/girl friend, and you accidentally spill it all over him/her?

F. You pass a love note in class, and someone in the row reads it before passing it on?

G. A boy goes to pick up a girl for their first date?

These are all adaptable to improvised writing, from the same type of situations.

Who Is Knocking?

One person at the door must develop a one-sided conversation with an imaginary person on the other side of the door. From his or her conversation the rest of the class should be able to determine the situation (who, what, where). Write a character sketch of the imaginary person, or you may have students write their own one-sided conversations.

Ad Imagination!

Divide your class into small groups. Have each group cut out about 10 ads which catch their imaginations. The ads are to be used in a skit. Give each group 20 minutes to put some logical sequence into the material they have selected. Each ad must in some way lead into the next one. Students may only use the words of the ads as part of their dialogue. If needed, a sentence or two may be added to help make logical connections.

Hats! Hats! Hats! (See Write On)

Collect a large number of hats from home, the lost and found, and the dramatic prop room, if you have one. As the teacher, put on one of the hats and talk to the class as though you are not aware of it. Once the class makes a point of asking why you are wearing a hat, tell them a hat reveals many things about its owner: age, personality, occupation, etc. Have students randomly select

a hat. Ask each student to put on his/her hat and act a story revealing:

A. The personality of the hat's owner.

B. Experiences the hat has had from the manufacturer to owner.

C. What will happen to the hat.

This may be readily adapted to writing.

Alphabet Soup

Assign each group three unrelated object words that they must incorporate into an improvised scene. They must not say the words during the scene. Instead, the objects should become key factors in which the action evolves. Some word suggestions:

A. Hammer, Zebra, Radishes

B. Ink, Bracelet, Bucket

C. Turnip, Clock, Ball

D. Seashell, Zipper, Elevator

E. Tractor, Monkey, Trumpet

F. Diamond, Rosebud, Dice.

The End

Assign a sentence to each group that must be used as the tag line (final sentence) of the scene. The group must determine a situation (who, what, where) and work up to using the final sentence logically. Some sample sentences:

A. But it was Harry all the time.

B. She thinks she's so smart.

C. Leave me alone . . . just leave me alone.

D. I'm so undecided.

E. Don't tell me what to do.

ROLE-PLAYING

ROLE-PLAYING: Placing yourself in the role of another person and reacting to the given situation.

RELATED WRITING ACTIVITIES:

1. Write an ending or response after participating in a role experience.
2. Evaluate points of view in an argumentative role playing activity.
3. Write situations for a role play. (who, what, where)
4. Write a character analysis after a role play.
5. Prepare your role for a role playing performance.
6. Parody a role playing activity.
7. Interview a character after seeing a role playing performance.
8. Write letters of advice to the characters in the role playing activity. (Dear Abby)

Animals Turn Human

Have each of your students scrutinize an animal or a bird in the woods, on a farm or in the zoo. Observe its body rhythm and action. Study individual movements of its head, wings, tail and paws. Portray these actions and sounds in front of the class. In an essay transfer the characteristics into human sounds, movements and mannerisms. For example, a woodpecker may suggest a gossipy woman; a frog may develop into a fat, solid businessman.

Feeling Better

Write the following childhood ailments on the board; Benjy Bully, Priscilla Pencil Thief, Norman Noisemaker, Sammy Smart Aleck, Melvin Messy Desk, Gloria Giggles, Peter Push-and-Shove and Nicky Know-it-all. Tell the class that each of them is to play the role of Dr. Cure-all and to think of as many ways to cure the ailments as possible. Then they are to write stories involving cures from the point of view of Dr. Cure-all.

Tragedy Strikes (High School Level -- Use with discretion)

Have students pair-up. Each pair is to create a scene that dramatizes one of the most tragic events that could ever happen to an individual (mother losing baby, scientist going blind etc.).

One student should role play the person directly involved in the situation and the other student should play a close friend or relative. The two students then write a script, complete with necessary stage directions, and try to use the precise words to convey the desired emotion. Two other students are then chosen at random, to read and perform this script.

Meet the Press

Have two students prepare the following role play situation. The first student, after doing some additional research, plays the role of an author that the class has recently studied. The other student prepares questions for a TV interview with that author. The particular focus of the student's questions (his life, his work, his attitudes, etc.) should be determined in advance.

After watching the interview, the rest of the class may be divided into groups.

Group #1 writes letters to the author about a particular concern stemming from the interview.

Group #2 writes an objective evaluation of the interview and role play.

Group #3 writes newspaper articles summarizing the interview.

IMAGING

IMAGING: Using words to develop a visual and/or sensory image within the child's mind. This does not involve physical activity, and as such is different in nature than the other sections. However, it is an invaluable addition for dramatic possibilities.

RELATED WRITING ACTIVITIES:

1. Write a paragraph modeling your experiences of a catastrophic event with climax and resolution.
2. Describe a sensory perception in writing.
3. Write a sequence of sensory events to take another person on.

"A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he knows something."
Wilson Mizner

IMAGING

Xeron

A. Have students close their eyes.

B. Verbally, move them through physical imagery of various textures.

C. Example: Clamber over sharp, craggy rocks, squish into deep ooze, slide on moss-covered rocky creek beds.

D. Give about 15-20 seconds' time to explore the sensations of each new terrain.

E. Write about the planet. Express feelings, communicate what they were feeling, and sensing.

Body "Writing"

A. Students listen to a beginning of a sentence, e.g.,

1. It was a cold, dark, damp day . . .
2. It's so hot and sticky and humid I can't . . .
3. If I could take a bath i the moonlight . . .

B. Students express those thoughts provoked by the sentence, using their bodies.

C. Students write only the beginning of a short story in which they describe the setting and their sensory perceptions about it.

D. Same the opening paragraphs for another time so the students can continue writing.

The Fire

A. Strike a cymbal several times - ask students what it sounds like.

B. Ask students, if the idea isn't offered, if it sounds like a fire engine bell.

C. Play a fast, exciting piece of music (suggested: "Firebird Suite" by Stravinsky), and talk with the students about the excitement, etc. of a fire.

D. Discuss climax in music.

E. Image students through a "fire" using music in the background.

F. Have students write a paragraph about the fire. Emphasize that it should make someone feel like he/she is there, experiencing the fire.

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